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MASS EXAMINATIONS PLANNED FOR CANCER CONTROL

Mass examination of populations is the only effective method to control the dissemination of gynecologic cancer. In recent years this method has been made standard practice in the Ukraine. The first oncological laboratories were organized in Kiev 3 years ago. These laboratories were subjected to numerous reorganizations but have eventually emerged as the front-line defenses in the fight against this dread disease and other oncologic diseases. In the 1948 program they were headquarters for the mass examination of all inhabitants of rural and municipal communities who were over 35.

It is a well-known fact that the Ministry of Health USSR does not sanction the use of middle medical personnel at these examination laboratories. The reasons for this policy are evident in view of the fact that even the most competent doctors make erroneous diagnoses in some cases of cancer of internal organs.

Many of the cases examined indicated cancer of the uterus. However, gynecologists and midwives must be instructed to consult a competent doctor in case there is any indication of an abnormality in the uterus. Moreover, the rule that prohibits midwives from doing any surgical operation which involves the use of surgical instruments is outmoded and prevents the midwives from fulfilling their prophylactic function. It leads to a situation where the greater majority of women living in rural communities will be denied the benefits of mass examinations and prophylaxis. This problem needs immediate solution in view of the fact that in 13 oblasts 67 percent of the examinations are made by midwives, while in Dneprobych, Kiev and Zaporozh'ye oblasts, all of the examinations are made by midwives. Moreover, patients with rectotic symptoms must be prevented from traveling long distances to oblast hospitals for treatment. Therefore, Ukrainian midwives have recently obtained permission from doctors to carry out some basic treatments such as application of ointments and medicinal preparations, spraying and powdering.

A midwife assigned to a rural community is expected to examine all the women in her community at least once a year. In this way it is hoped that in 2-3 years it will be possible not only to lower the number of patients with cancer of the genitals but possibly eliminate this disease completely. Prof. A. Lur'ya, Corresponding Member, Academy of Sciences USSR, Laureate of Stalin Prize, Kiev. - E. M. D.

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